



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Chinook Rod and Gun Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:

- Creation of a shelter at the Pistol Range from an 8'x20' land/sea container with three handicap-accessible shooting benches.
- Purchase and install a 5000-watt Honda generator and construct a shed for its protection at the Chinook Rod and Gun Club Trap Range.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club is located on 80 acres in Blaine County 3.4 miles southeast of Chinook, Montana on Clear Creek Road, Lat. 48.54889, Long. -109.31111; Section 7, T32N, R19E.

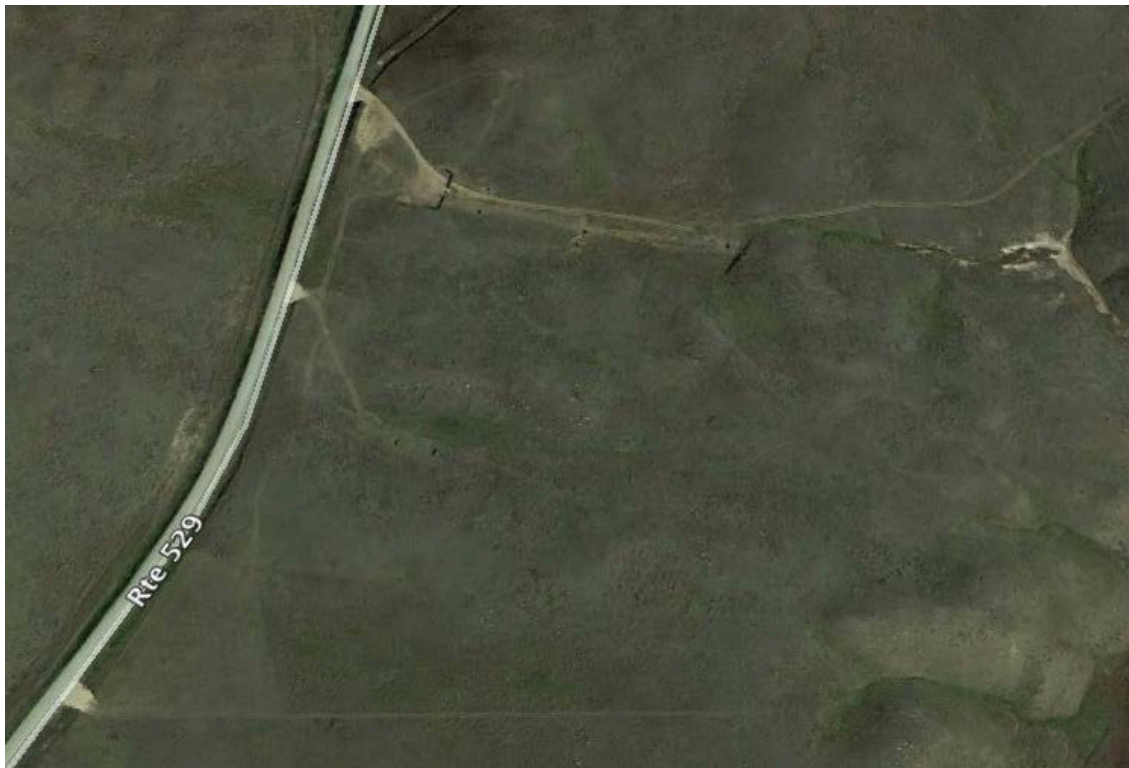


Figure 1. Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range, Chinook, Montana.



Figure 2. Proposed Trap Range Clubhouse, Chinook Rod and Gun Club

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

The proposed project will enhance the existing shooting activities at the Chinook Rod and Gun Club. The shelter at the Pistol Range will create a comfortable, safe, secure, and handicap-accessible place for all members and visitors to meet rain or shine. Currently the Chinook Rod and Gun Club does not own a generator to operate the traps at the Trap Range and must borrow one for events. Owning a generator would improve the convenience and safety of the Trap Range. The proposed funding will contribute to the long-term safety, convenience, and usefulness of the facility for the club members, the local community, and the general public.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The 2016 goals for the Chinook Rod and Gun Club are 1) create a shelter at the Pistol Range with three ADA handicap-accessible shooting benches to accommodate adults and youth and 2) purchase a 5000-watt Honda generator and construct a shed for its protection to power the Trap Range.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

Of the total 80 acres of the Chinook Rod and Gun Club Shooting Range, the proposed improvements at the Pistol Range and Trap Range would affect less than ¼ acre.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The 80-acre Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is located on private land with a 25-year lease, running from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2038, for the entire 80 acres. The land is not within or adjacent to any floodplain. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. Waterways on the property comprise only intermittent seasonal runoff.

9. Description of Project:

1. Pistol Range container	\$ 6,000
2. Modifications, metal, doors	\$ 3,000
3. Shooting Benches	\$ 1,500
4. 5000-watt Honda generator	\$ 4,500
5. Generator shed	\$ 1,200
6. Misc Grant Administration	\$ 580
Total Project Budget	\$16,780
Total Funding Requested	\$ 8,390

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$8,390

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is located on 80 acres of exclusively private land leased to the Chinook Rod and Gun Club. This is a private range operated and maintained by the Chinook Rod and Gun

Club. Membership to the Chinook Rod and Gun Club is \$30 per year for individuals and \$50 per family. Organizations that have used the range include: 4H Shooting Sports, Bullhook Black Powder, Insight Target Operators, Chinook Rod and Gun Club, Chinook Police, Blaine County Sheriff Department, Adult Education Women's Handgun Class, and FWP Hunter Education.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is a private range operated and maintained by the Chinook Rod and Gun Club, a non-profit organization. Because it is a private range, there has not been public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range improvement proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Keith Hanson, P.O. Box 13, Chinook, MT 59523. (406) 357-3573.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club Shooting Range is located southwest of Chinook and serves Chinook as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The majority of members reside in or around Chinook. The closest range with similar shooting opportunities is 27 miles away in Havre, Montana.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: March 7, 2016.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the **Proposed Alternative**, and **Alternative B**, the **No Action Alternative**, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct a Pistol Range shelter with handicap-accessible shooting benches; to purchase a 5000-watt Honda generator for the Trap Range; and construct a shed to house the generator at the Trap Range. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that was deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No**

Action Alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		#4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		#7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		#11

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may temporarily leave the area during construction.

4. The elimination of vegetation for the implementation of the proposed project will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native

vegetation in the area.

7. The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during installation of the Pistol Range shelter and construction of the generator shed. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

11. The property is already used as a shooting range so the proposed project will have no additional impact on the aesthetics of the property.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		

10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed installation of the Pistol Range shelter with handicap-accessible shooting benches, purchase of a generator for the Trap Range, and construction of a shed to house the generator would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed improvements to the Chinook Rod and Gun Club range will improve the quality and safety of the shooting sports within the community.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club's Proposed Alternative, to provide a safe, regulated shooting opportunity, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

- Keith Hanson, P.O. Box 13, Chinook, MT 59523. (406) 357-3573.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

April 25, 2016

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Blaine County Journal News, Chinook, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.